DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 395 SP 031 866

AUTHOR Sapone, Carmelo V.
TITLE A Mentorship Model for Students At-Risk.
PUB DATE Nov 89
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education (14th, San Antonio, TX, November 17-21, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affective Objectives; *College School Cooperation; Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *High Risk Students; *Humanistic Education; Low Achievement; *Mentors; Program Development; Self Esteem

ABSTRACT

In this discussion of the use of mentors working with at-risk students, it is suggested that universities involved in preservice education should establish jointly, with local schools, the training of teachers in affective education--mainly in the area of self-esteem. The stress on cognitive development should take a secondary role, rather than a primary role, at least initially; affective strategies should become the primary role of this university/school relationship. It is recommended that university and school personnel become partners in: (1) the identification of at-risk students; (2) the development of appropriate curriculum and intervention strategies to raise the self-esteem of at-risk students; (3) the training and use of mentors dealing in the affective arena with at-risk students; and (4) the expansion of the role of mentors in schools to help students achieve personal worth, personal competence, and dignity in school and in life. A list of 45 variables that have been found to be associated with at-risk students is appended. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. V. Sapone

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A MENTORSHIP MODEL FOR STUDENTS AT-RISK

By

Dr. Carmelo V. Sapone

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED314395

Most educators of today's schools pride themselves on having exemplary educational programs in operation. They point to the many productive indicators of school success. A few of these quality indicators as listed in the research literature include: 1) High academic orientation and student success, 2) Strong principal leadership, 3) Positive school climate, 4) Meaningful school community relations, and 5) A strong commitment to school success.

Many schools have moved beyond the typical variables found in effective and successful school literature. These schools have moved towards the concept of "Mentorship" as one necessary component in school curriculum and in the instructional process.

The concept of mentorship is a relatively new action phenomenon in today's school curriculum. This may be due to the large amount of new literature on this subject, and on the greater emphasis placed by States and the National government on the mentorship concept. It is also a viable alternative to current school curriculum thought insuring greater cost effectiveness with little or no cost to the schools.

In reviewing the literature on the use of "Mentors" in schools, it is apparent that most schools adhere to one basic concept of the uses of mentors. That use is predominate on cognitive growth. Little or no emphasis is placed on affective education, personal growth, or personal competence. This is in keeping with the accepted definition of a Mentor, i.e., "Mentoring is the process by

SP031866

which persons of superior rank, special achievement, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of persons identified as protegees."[1]

This definition is limited in its scope, depth and direction. It makes the assumption that only one person has anything of value or significance to offer another. It further reduces the potential of the mentorship concept and restricts its use to a small segment of the school population, mainly those in gifted and talented programs.

Accountability stresses that educators should design relevant educational programs dealing with the larger issue of the uses of mentors in schools. By adopting a "Macro" view of education and of mentorship in a school/community setting, the potential for student learning is increased; students of different abilities and interests become more involved in the teaching/learning process, and the use of mentors, within and outside of the school, is greatly expanded.

One area that has not been explored in depth is the use of mentors dealing with at-risk student.

Who are these at-risk students? Which students are at risk? What are they like? How can mentors help? How can schools and universities, working as a team, train potential or existing teachers to deal with at-risk students?

Frymier and Gansneder define students-at-risk as "Anyone who is likely to fail - either in school or in life".[2] In their review of the literature, and in their research study of 276 schools involving 22,018 students, they have identified 45 variables which may contribute to risk. This identification process of listing the many risk factors is one meaningful attempt to help

educators design relevant programs to help reduce risk factors that contribute to student failure. The use of mentors, working in the areas of risk dealing with affective education, is one attempt to insure student success.

Universities involved in pre-service education should establish, jointly, with the local schools, the training of teachers in affective education - mainly in the area of self-esteem. Using the research on effective school literature, an inservice program should be given high priority in dealing with at-risk students. Direct cooperative intervention through inservice by the university and the local schools can insure greater success for this population. Emphasis should be placed on raising the esteem level of all students, especially those not achieving academic success. The stress on cognitive development should take a secondary role, initially, rather than a primary role. Affective strategies should become the primary role of this university/school relationship.

It is recommended that university and school personnel become partners in: 1) the identification of at-risk students, 2) the development of appropriate curriculum and intervention strategies to raise the self esteem of at-risk students, 3) train and use mentors dealing in the affective arena with at-risk students, and 4) expand the role of mentors in schools to help students achieve personal worth, personal competence, and dignity in school and in life.

Chart I describes a mentorshp process for enhancing school success for at-risk students. It also provides a general education model for school improvement. Using the research literature on effective schools, four major areas have been identified in this model as having greater potential for increasing the effectiveness on and influencing and shaping quality education. These include: 1) Student effect variables, 2) Pre-service and in-service components for quality education, 3) School effectiveness variables, and 4)

school climate variables. All of these components have been found to influence school success in some significant way.

One effective way that mentors can be used to help at-risk students is for the universities and the local schools to address and remediate the forty-five variables [see Table I] that have been found to be associated with at-risk students. Developing teacher and student potential in the educational process through appropriate affective strategies and meaningful intervention approaches can improve the teaching/learning process in the school curriculum. Some of the positive intervention strategies that can be used by teachers with at-risk students include: 1) Individualized tutoring, 2) Flexible scheduling, 3) Correctives and reinforcement concepts, (4) Additional instruction in the basic and prerequisite skills, 5) Pairing of in-school and out of-school mentors, in the areas of self growth, responsibility, ego enhancement, and cooperative learning, 6) Immediate feedback on all issues regarding the welfare of at-risk students, and 7) Student service. Placing greater emphasis on affective education with at-risk can insure: 1) The recognition and self-worth of each individual, 2) Placing emphasis on students achieving their own personal competence, 3) Insure greater use of peer-tutoring and cooperative learning models, 4) Expand the use of teacher coaching, 5) Increase the opportunity for affective modeling, and 6) Increase the development of student pride, love, recognition and self worth.

Universities can provide this meaningful relationship with local schools by helping beginning and experienced teachers to focus on the four major components as identified in the mentorship education model. When teacher's vision of education changes to reflect student success, student growth and achievement becomes a natural by-product of such a process.

It becomes incumbent that universities and schools develop affective education through pre-service and in-service education for all those involved in the area of education. When the focus shifts to affective variables as a first priority, the holding power of schools is increased. Student achievement is commensurate with the effort placed on self-learning and on self motivation.

What are some of the benefits that can accrue from this model for at-risk students? They include:

* Increased student achievement in academics
* Greater development of student self-esteem
* Less vandalism in schools
* Increased student self-motivation
* Increased growth of personal competence
* Increased student school attendance
* Better student/teacher interpersonal relationships
* A more productive school/home environment
* A positive school climate
* Expansion of the concept of "mentors" at all levels of schooling
* Greater recognition by the community on the value of schooling
* Enhancing the cost-benefit of school resources
* Insuring greater school accountability
* Insuring greater congruence on the role of education between the school and the community
* Increasing the potential for good mental health
* Insuring greater school efficiency
* Expanding the leadership potential for all
* Increase of human resources available to achieve school goals

The benefits derived from this priority should exceed the energies and money spent on cognitive education. This is not to suggest that cognitive education is no longer important, but merely to reinforce the research literature that school and life failure does little to enhance productive citizenship. It is when at-risk students feel growth in their own personal life that school success becomes a reality.

Parents insist on schools becoming more accountable to the community on the education of their students. The extended use of mentors for at-risk students should increase the viability of this concept by insuring success and well being for all.

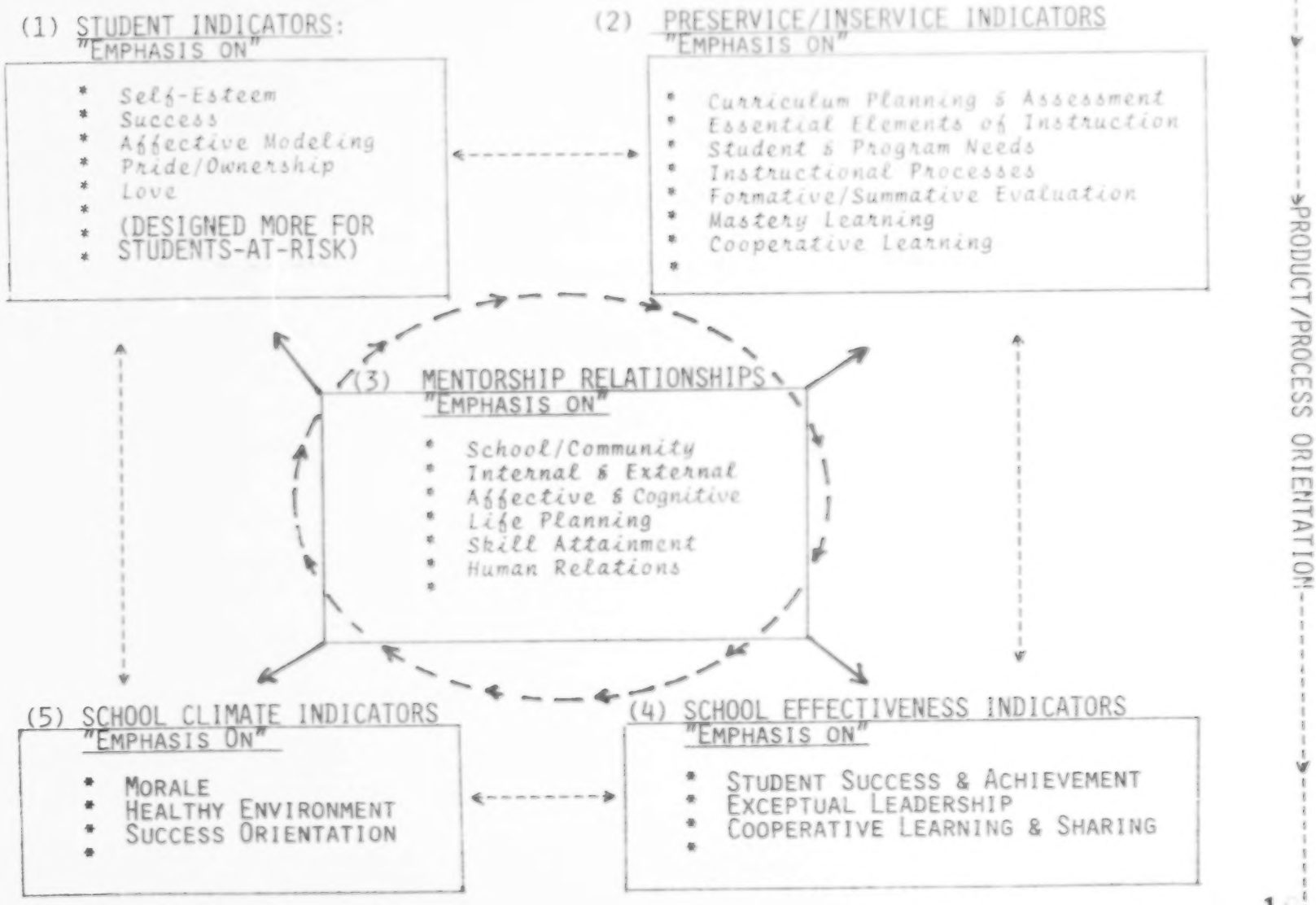
TABLE I

THE PHI DELTA KAPPA STUDY OF STUDENTS AT RISK: RESEARCHER'S ESTIMATES OF WHAT MAKES A CHILD AT RISK [KANSAS CITY TRAINING SESSION]

Number	Item	Value/Weight
1.	Attempted suicide during the past year	465.4
2.	Used drugs or engaged in substance abuse	465.0
3.	Has been a drug "pusher" during the past year	462.1
4.	Student's sense of self esteem is negative	455.4
5.	Was involved in pregnancy during past year	450.6
6.	Was expelled from school during the past year	443.3
7.	Consumes alcohol regularly	441.0
8.	Was arrested for illegal activity	438.1
9.	Parents have negative attitudes toward education	437.1
10.	Has several brothers or sisters who dropped out	432.1
11.	Was sexually or physically abused last year	431.9
12.	Failed two courses last school year	429.2
13.	Was suspended from school twice last year	429.2
14.	Student was absent more than 20 days last year	429.2
15.	Parent drinks excessively and is an alcoholic	411.6
16.	Was retained in grade [i.e., "Held Back"]	403.1
17.	One parent attempted suicide last year	399.7
18.	Scored below 20th %ile on standardized test	397.0
19.	Other family members used drugs during past year	389.0
20.	Attended three or more schools during past five years	383.2
21.	Average grades were below "C" last school year	380.3
22.	Was arrested for driving while intoxicated	364.9
23.	Has an IQ below 90	353.7
24.	Parents divorced or separated last year	353.6
25.	Father is unskilled during the past year	346.3
26.	Father or mother died during the past year	345.4
27.	Diagnosed as being in Special Education	336.2
28.	English is not language used most often in home	335.5
29.	Mother is unskilled laborer who is unemployed	329.7
30.	Lives in inner city, urban area	321.7
31.	The mother is only parent living in the home	320.3
32.	Is year older than other students in same grade	319.5
33.	Mother did not graduate from high school	315.9
34.	Father lost his job during the past year	305.8
35.	Was dropped from athletic team during the past year	296.2
36.	Experienced a serious illness or accident	295.1
37.	Does not participate in extracurricular activities	295.0
38.	Parent had major change in health status	294.9
39.	Had a close friend die during past year	293.7
40.	Had a brother or sister die during the past year	288.8
41.	Father did not graduate from high school	263.0
42.	Changed schools during the year	262.6
43.	Changed place or residence during the past year	253.3
44.	Has three or more brothers or sisters	175.3
45.	Is the youngest child in the family	157.7

PRODUCT/PROCESS ORIENTATION

CHART I: A UNIVERSITY & SCHOOL PRESERVICE/INSERVICE MENTORSHIP MODEL



PRODUCT/PROCESS ORIENTATION

PRODUCT/PROCESS ORIENTATION

PRODUCT/PROCESS ORIENTATION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Blackwell, James E., "Mentoring: An Action Strategy for Increasing Minority Faculty", Academe, September-October, 1989, p. 8.

2. Frymier, Jack, and Gansneder, Bruce, "The Phi Delta Kappa Study of Students-at-Risk", Phi Delta Kappan, October 1989, p. 142.